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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2562
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1336
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0558
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 1000
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1077
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 5061
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 0792

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NAXALITES ATTACK POWER PLANT IN ANDHRA PRADESH

REFS: A) KOLKATA 0144 B) CHENNAI 0083

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. On May 30, Naxalites attacked a hydroelectric power plant in northeast Andhra Pradesh, causing damage to the plant's control room and injuring one employee. The attack, along with the recent killing of a Congress party functionary, demonstrates the Naxalites' continued ability to operate, at least in a limited fashion, in Andhra Pradesh despite the state's aggressive campaign to combat the terrorist threat. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) On May 30, Naxalites (a violent subgroup of India's Maoists) attacked a hydroelectric power plant in East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, close to the border with Orissa. According to media reports, 50 armed Naxalites seized the plant's control room, ordered the employees out, and triggered an explosion. One employee was injured in the blast. The blast damaged the plant's control panels, and a team of engineers has been dispatched by the company to conduct repairs. The attack on the plant occurred a day after a group of Naxalites marched on a village in Visakhapatnam district and killed a functionary from the ruling Congress party, shooting him at point blank range.

13. (SBU) The Superintendent of Police for East Godavari District told post the power plant attack was "an insignificant incident," noting that at 24 megawatts the plant is not a major facility. He said that only eight to ten Naxalites were involved, not the 50 claimed by the media. The Superintendent said that the attack caused just \$2000 in damage to equipment and the injury sustained by the plant employee was minor. He added that the Naxalites attacked the plant to express opposition against a government plan to excavate bauxite in the area, and also against encounter killings of Naxalite members. An officer with Andhra Pradesh's elite anti-Naxalite "Greyhound" unit agreed that the attacks were attempts to register protest against the bauxite mine. He said the Naxalites were trying to reassert their presence, but added that it is significant that they can only do so in remote areas.

14. COMMENT: (SBU) Andhra Pradesh has enjoyed considerable success in quelling the insurgency with its aggressive campaign against the Naxalites (reftels). But the attacks reinforce that even one of India's most successful anti-Naxalite campaigns cannot provide absolute insurance, especially in far-flung areas. The Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh effectively exploit the limitations of state-to-state cooperation by launching attacks from neighboring states and

retreating to safe-havens afterwards: Andhra Pradesh authorities have commented on their difficulties policing their border with neighboring Orissa (ref A). By choosing a target located in a remote area, close to the border with Orissa, the Naxalites were able to strike at infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh despite the state's aggressive approach. END COMMENT.

15. This message was coordinated with Embassy New Delhi.

HOPPER